

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, NEWS

LYNN GRANTED \$500,000 TO CLEAN UP LAUNDRY

BY EMILY PAULS | May 26, 2023

LYNN — The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has awarded the city a \$500,000 Brownfields Cleanup Grant funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

“Grant funds will be used to clean up Whyte’s Enterprise Laundry at 83 Willow St. in the Buffum South area, which is contaminated with chlorinated volatile organic compounds and other volatile organic compounds,” a press release from the EPA said.

According to the office of U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.), from the 1930s to the 1990s, the site was a dry-cleaner and laundry facility. In 2000, the building was demolished.

“No community should have to be saddled with toxic pollutants that threaten public health. Thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the EPA can finally dedicate resources to cleaning up the site of Whyte’s Enterprise Laundry in Lynn,” Moulton said. “The facility’s demolition decades ago left a 5-foot open pit where the building stood and left behind volatile compounds that threaten public health.”

The grant is going to be “key” for the process of cleanup and decontamination to begin, he said.

13 other communities and organizations in Massachusetts will receive a Brownfields Cleanup Grant, bringing the total amount allotted in the Commonwealth to \$8,740,000.

“EPA’s Brownfields Program provides grants and technical assistance to communities, states, tribes, and others to assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse contaminated properties,” the EPA’s website said.

Associate Planning Director Lauren Drago said the application for the grant was a combined effort between the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC/Lynn), the Planning Department, and Mayor Jared Nicholson's office. Now that the grant has been secured, she will be the project manager for the grant while EDIC/Lynn will be the fiduciary agent.

"EDIC/Lynn has already leveraged nearly \$1 million from MassDevelopment and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to study and remediate the site, and this grant enables us to continue this important work," Drago wrote in a statement to *The Daily Item*.

EDIC/Lynn has also secured a grant from MassDevelopment, which it used to hire DREAM Collaborative to help create a vision for the site, she said.

Drago said she is "thrilled" that EPA has given the grant to the city.

"The Whyte's Laundromat site and its contamination is a key challenge for our downtown, not just for that site, but for many nearby properties, and this \$500,000 will enable us to make major progress in cleanup," Drago wrote. "This will support a healthy downtown for people and the environment, and it will help move us one step closer to turning the site into something our community wants to see there."

EDIC/Lynn Operations Manager Bill Bochnak said the corporation is very thankful to the government officials who advocated for the city to receive the grant and provided "critical resources."

"We have a great team here in Lynn and I am looking forward to working with my colleagues in planning and our other city departments as we continue to move this site forward towards a property that one day can be positioned for reuse and is no longer challenged by its current condition and state," Bochnak wrote in a statement to the *Item*.

Nicholson said that the \$500,000 grant will help ensure that the city can "protect" the local environment and "revitalize" areas that are currently not suitable for public use.

"I am grateful for the Planning Department and EDIC's commitment to clean up brownfields, which is a testament to our city's priority of taking action to make a sustainable difference in future development projects," Nicholson said.

State Sen. Brendan Crighton (D-Lynn) said the funding will go a long way toward cleaning the contaminated area at 83 Willow St.

"Thank you to the city and federal partners who worked hard to secure this grant," Crighton said.



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